

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 1899

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBER, 1899.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

THE TRANSVAAL CONTINGENT.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I ask this Council, with some confidence, to join with the Legislative Assembly in passing the resolution of which I have given notice. That resolution begins by declaring—

That this Council renews the assurance of its loyalty and devotion to the Throne and Person of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen—

and goes on to state—

and as evidence of its sympathy with Her Majesty's subjects in the South African Republic, who have for so long a period suffered burdensome disabilities and grievous injustice, desires to support the determination of Her Majesty's advisers to secure the immediate recognition of British rights in that Republic. This Council therefore views with approbation the proposal of the Government to equip, despatch, and maintain a military force volunteering for service with Her Majesty's army in South Africa, consisting of 250 officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the Queensland Mounted Infantry, together with a machine gun section of the Queensland Regiment of Royal Australian Artillery.

I am sure the Council will feel itself in sympathy with this resolution, and will assist me in giving effect to it. The matter is very simple. Some time ago the Commandant waited on the Premier and informed him that there were a large number of volunteers, especially from the Queensland Mounted Infantry, who were anxious to take service in South Africa; and he asked the Premier to take steps to communicate that request to the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and offer their services. The Premier did so, and received a prompt reply from Mr. Chamberlain, stating that he very gladly received and accepted the offer of assistance. I have no doubt he felt that it was not so much the number of men that we offered as the promptness with which a British colony came to the moral assistance, and practically to do what they could to help the mother country in time of danger, that made the value of the offer. That offer, and the spirit of patriotism which prompted it, will no doubt react upon ourselves some day, when very likely we may be in a position to be glad of the assistance of Great Britain in time of need, and I am sure it will have a very large moral effect not only upon the English-speaking world, but upon other nations, who will see by this spontaneous movement which has taken place in Australia and Canada that the Empire is behind Great Britain when any emergency arises.

HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN: Hear, hear!

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: It is in that spirit that the Government undertook to make the offer it did. It is true that the resolution comes to us a little late, but that is, as hon. gentlemen are well aware, in consequence of something that transpired in another

place, in which something else was tacked on to the resolution, but which, as events proved, has been removed, and the resolution itself was carried unanimously. The object of the resolution is to enable the Government to expend a certain sum of money—not a very large sum, some £33,000—in equipping a force of volunteers to join Her Majesty's army in South Africa. I notice that recently a proclamation has been issued by His Excellency the Administrator, a portion of which I will read. The proclamation concludes with this paragraph—

And whereas Her Majesty has authorised a force of volunteers to be raised in the said colony for the purposes aforesaid, and has directed that such force shall, as from the embarkation thereof, be deemed to be serving with Her Majesty's regular forces: Now, therefore, I, Sir Samuel Walker Griffith, the Administrator of the Government aforesaid, do hereby proclaim and declare that a military force of volunteers shall be and is hereby authorised to be raised and enrolled for service with Her Majesty's army in South Africa, consisting of 250 officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the Queensland Mounted Infantry, including a machine gun section, the detailed establishment whereof is more particularly described in the schedule hereunder set out.

Hon. gentlemen will see by that that the British Government have "gone one better" than we proposed. We thought that when our forces had reached South Africa would be the time when they would join the British troops, but the Colonial Office have informed us that they shall be deemed as serving with Her Majesty's army from the moment they embark. Much has happened since this offer was made. The war has really commenced. A great battle has been fought, with, I am glad to say, success to the British arms.

HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN: Hear, hear!

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I trust that will continue to be the case throughout the whole campaign, and my own opinion is that it will. At any rate, there is not the slightest doubt the British nation is thoroughly aroused, and that this thing has got to be settled now and for ever. I do not intend to continue my remarks at any great length. Hon. gentlemen are so thoroughly seized of the situation that there is no necessity for it. I believe the spirit of patriotism which is evident, not only in this House, but in the country, will carry us through everything, and that we all experience a feeling of great satisfaction to feel that the men of our Defence Force are only too anxious to volunteer their services where the Empire is in danger. I am sure that those of them who return will receive a hearty welcome from the people of the colony. It is pleasing to observe that the country is entirely of one opinion in connection with this matter. They have sent their tribute from all parts of the colony to the camp, and there is nothing left now but that these volunteers, having been properly equipped by the Government, should, after being in camp a short time, take their departure by the "Cornwall," which has been specially fitted up for the purpose, and is advertised to sail on Monday. There is no doubt they will get a magnificent send-off by the people of the colony, which they well deserve. Although perhaps their services may not be required, still by their action they have risen to height of a great occasion, and when they return they will be welcomed as heroes, as men who have done their duty, and as men of whom the colony may well be proud. I have much pleasure in moving the motion standing in my name.

HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN: Hear, hear!

HON. A. C. GREGORY: I think I am only expressing the views of the majority on this side of the Council when I say that I fully concur with the movement that

has taken place. Exception has been taken elsewhere that the Ministry took action without first consulting the Parliament. But during any recess of Parliament, even if it be only between Friday and Tuesday, it is the duty of the Government to take whatever executive action may be necessary in order to prepare matters for Parliament to finally decide. Therefore, as far as the past action of the Government has gone, I myself fully coincide in the course they adopted. What is the use of an Executive unless it is to act as an Executive, and do the business of the country in the intervals between the time when they can refer to Parliament? Of course, they are responsible for what they did on this occasion, and I think they very seldom fail in their duty in carrying out what they have a fair knowledge that the majority of Parliament will support them in. With regard to this particular question, it is important that this colony should show its loyalty to the United Kingdom as a whole. We are part of the United Kingdom, not alone of Great Britain and Ireland, but of the United Kingdom of the British people. Some may think that our troops will not get to South Africa in time, but even if they do not, the moral effect of the fact that they are going forward may bring about an earlier conclusion of peace, under satisfactory conditions, than might otherwise happen. Therefore, even though they should not get there in time for active service it is possible we shall do a great deal of good, and save much trouble, by sending our contingent. Of course, our Defence Force cannot be moved out of the country, and it is well understood that in this instance those who go to South Africa go there as volunteers. They are free to say whether they will go or whether they will not. There is no pressure or coercion or anything else unduly brought to bear to induce them to go. They go of their own free will and accord, as is the right of British subjects. With regard to the question at issue in South Africa, from what little information during years past I have collected bearing upon it, it is quite evident that if Great Britain wishes to maintain her supremacy in South Africa she must carry out this war to the end. The end of the war, whatever may be the partial successes and partial reverses, undoubtedly will be with the British troops. There can be no question of that. Their organisation is far superior to that of the Boers, and the cause in which they are fighting is far better. They are fighting for the free and independent condition of Britons in a country which is under the suzerainty of Great Britain. The cause of the war has been an attempt to oppress British subjects, who have chanced to go to a country which was formerly directly under the British Crown, and which would still have been under the British Crown but for the vacillating policy which was unfortunately followed by the English Government some years ago. That policy was simply to stave off trouble, to serve the present at the expense of the future. Most of the parties who got us into the trouble have passed away, and now our proper business is to carry out effectually the maintenance of the supremacy of the British Empire in all its possessions. I am satisfied that the Council will almost unanimously concur in the motion now brought forward by the Government. I need not say more, because in reality the subject does not admit of more than one question—Are we right in the proceeding or not? I say undoubtedly and unmistakably it is not only right but it is our imperative duty to do as is proposed in this resolution.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: I entirely agree with the first part of this resolution in which we

are asked to renew our assurance of loyalty and devotion to Her Majesty, but I deny that the remainder of the resolution is absolutely in accordance with fact—that Her Majesty's subjects in South Africa have for so long a period suffered burdensome disabilities and grievous injustice.

HON. A. NORTON: Hear, hear!

HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: I say that is begging the question.

HON. A. NORTON: No.

HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: I know that my voice may be, and probably is, alone in this; but, whether it is or not, I shall speak the truth that is within me, irrespective of any expression of dissent. I have a right to hold my opinions, and I dare say I am as intelligent a member of society as the hon. member who interjects. I have not arrived at my opinions without due consideration, and I do not surrender my feelings of loyalty to any man. I consider that it is surplussage to say that we renew our assurance of loyalty to Her Majesty; we have all taken the oath of allegiance, and no doubt every one of us feels devotion and loyalty to Her Majesty. Though it is a legal axiom that the Queen can do no wrong, the Queen's advisers can do wrong. In past days they have done, and they have been turned out of office in past days for doing wrong. If we look back at the wars which have taken place during the last century, and read the record in the light of to-day, we find that the British Parliament have been often wrong. It is not far back to the liberation of the United States, and who to-day will justify the action of the majority of the British House of Parliament in regard to the action they took against what is now known as the United States of America? There is no doubt that the coercive policy adopted by a section of politicians at that time was entirely wrong. We assert in this resolution something that is not susceptible of proof—not the absolute proof which would justify us in passing such a resolution—when we speak of "Her Majesty's subjects in the South Africa Republic who have for so long a period suffered burdensome disabilities and grievous injustice," and so forth. I say that has not been incontestably proved, and a considerable section of the members of the British House of Commons are of that opinion—that it has not been proved.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Nota large section.

HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: I say a very considerable section. It may be that it is a section whose views are not to receive any consideration, but will anybody read the history of England towards the end of the last century and the beginning of this century, and say whether the majority who ruled in that day or the minority were right. It is incontestably proved that the minority were right, and in not so long a time they became the majority, and have remained practically the majority up to the present day. It cannot be urged, because the opinions of the minority may be unpalatable to the majority, that therefore the opinion of the lesser number is an incorrect one. There was a time at the foundation of our faith when there was a small minority on the side of that faith, and an enormous majority against it, and to say that the majority is right because it is the majority is to say what is not clear, at any rate, to my reasoning. With regard to this particular case I think hon. members have not given full consideration to the claims or to the rights of these men whom it is proposed to send men to combat as to whether they are in the wrong or not. And even if they were in the wrong, has the time arrived in the history of that great country to which we are all so proud to belong when it is necessary that she should have the assistance of this body of men—this

insignificant body of men, as far as numbers are concerned? I have no doubt that if this wretched sending is to take place—and it appears to me to be inevitable—these men will do their duty as well as any British officers and men ever did—I say that absolutely unreservedly—but I also say that according to my lights they are being sent to bolster up an unjust cause.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: No.

HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman must put himself inside myself before he can utter that "no" as far as I am concerned. I have a right to my opinion.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: You may be wrong.

HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: Of course I may be wrong, as the hon. member may be wrong. I can only speak the truth that is in me, and that is all any other hon. gentleman can do unless he is a sort of kaleidoscopic man whose views take a different light according to the way he is turned. I hold that the sending of this contingent is an immoral and improper thing. I would be the last to object if the interests of England were at stake, but I maintain that this is in no way a matter that affects the Empire. This is to a certain extent a domestic quarrel raised between a British colony and a large body of people, who were dispossessed of their

holding and turned out, and made [4 p.m.] to move on and move on from that time to the present. Is the Empire so hard hit that we should send this contingent to be used as a weapon of war against a body of men whose position is defensible certainly from a moral point of view? I say, that had it not been for that unfortunate discovery of gold and diamonds in that country the Boer would have been left to go on his own way in his own fashion; but when that country became valuable from the discovery of gold and diamonds—whose existence was not known when these were driven out of the country they formerly occupied—then the grasping Englishman says, "You must move on. We want this, and we are going to have it." That is the position. The Uitlander claims the rights of those men who have won the wilderness. If the Uitlander was, as in the case of Queensland, a Chinaman, no word would be said. I use the word "Chinaman" advisedly, because though China was on terms of amity with Great Britain, we put a poll tax on Chinamen to prevent them from coming here and going on our diggings. We did not do it to any other nation. And now for the lust of gold and the desire to acquire something that we have no earthly right to so far as our morality goes, we are going to attempt to dispossess these men of what is theirs. I do not think any reasonable man can say that we have any right to turn these men away because there are certain things in the ground which God put there, and which we want. We flood the country with a large number of our adventurers, and I admit that a large amount of English capital has been sent there, but English capital must take its risks. Because these large speculators and investors in mines desire to keep possession of the land, that is no reason why we who have no part in the quarrel should send a body of men to fight in a matter that is, to my mind, unjust and improper. What earthly reason have we for sending these men? Is the Empire in danger?

HON. H. C. WOOD: No.

HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: Of course the only answer that can be given is that just given by the Hon. Mr. Wood. Is the great British Empire in such a tottering condition that 250 men from Queensland are going to turn the balance?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Contingents are going from Canada and the other colonies.

HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: Will the hon. gentleman add them all together, and tell me the total number from the various colonies that will be sufficient to save the British Empire from destruction at the hands of the Boers? If the hon. gentleman tells me, and tells me in all sincerity, that by throwing into the scale the weight of these men it is proposed to send from this colony we shall save the British Empire, I would be the very last to oppose the resolution; but I say distinctly that we are asked to pass a resolution approving of a war entered into for the love of pelf and dollars, and for nothing else, and holding that this is an unjust and improper war, I enter my protest against one of our men being sacrificed for such a purpose. I know that the resolution will be passed.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: Hon. members may say, "Hear, hear!" but they must remember that if we create this precedent in a bad cause we do not know what we may have to do later on. If it was a just cause I would be the very first to advocate assisting that great country from which we sprung, but I say that the opinion expressed in this resolution is not universally held by the leading men in England. The hon. gentleman who introduced it knows as well as I do that there is a considerable section—and not an unintelligent section—in Great Britain who are opposed to this war. Are they, because they are in a minority, wrong? Is the hon. gentleman not aware that the battle of freedom in Great Britain has been fought by minorities until the minority became a majority? The minority is not necessarily wrong; on the other hand, the minority is very often right. It would be foolish to assert that the minority is necessarily wrong, because that would be asserting that the Christian religion is wrong. There is a much larger number of Mahomedans and Buddhists than the number of people belonging to the religion which we profess—I use the word "profess" advisedly, because I do not think the element of Christianity enters very much into this resolution. Therefore the fact of the majority being in favour of it is a matter of absolute indifference to me. I hold my opinion, formed after full consideration and after much reading, and with every desire and leaning towards the blood that runs in my own veins; and I say distinctly that in my opinion this war is an unjust one, and that the assistance offered by this colony is improper on those lines. But as a matter of expediency it is also absurd, because England is not so hard stricken that she wants men from Queensland. If England was hard stricken she would get any number of men from this colony, and very properly so; but is this war a reason why we should indulge in these warlike fireworks? These poor, deluded men who are going there—many of whom, I am afraid, will never return—are going to take part in an unjust and improper struggle; and I am not going to vote for what I believe to be not only bad in itself, but what may have a most dangerous effect in connection with what may occur in the future. If we are to be recognised as a portion of the British Empire, and bear our share of the burdens of the Empire, then let us have representation in the British Parliament at home, so that we may deal with these matters, but I ask why are we to be spasmodically worked upon? It is like a dose of some particularly irritating opening medicine given to those gentlemen who are desirous of relieving themselves in some way, and they think the best way to relieve themselves is by sending this contingent to South Africa. I

admire those men who have volunteered to give their lives in this cause; but I think blame must attach to the Government who have induced and incited them.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Neither induced nor incited.

HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: We will say inveigled them into giving their services for to my mind, such an unjust cause. As I say, I may stand alone. I may be holding views absolutely at variance with those held by the great majority of hon. gentlemen. But they are the views that I hold, and that I have the good sense, I believe, to express. I hold them, and nothing will alter them, and I have arrived at them, as I said before, only after very serious consideration and after looking at the case in every aspect.

HON. A. NORTON: I do not know if it was I who interrupted the hon. gentleman and gave him some cause for irritation.

HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: I am not irritated.

HON. A. NORTON: I merely said "Hear, hear!" and if the hon. gentleman did not like it, I apologise to him. At the same time, I would point out that it is not unusual to interject when an hon. member is speaking, and it would be rather an advantage if there were a little more of it in this Chamber, as it might lead to a little more animation in our debates. With respect to the matter under consideration, I do not agree in the least with the hon. gentleman who has just spoken, although I give him credit for speaking the truth according to his interpretation of it. The same may be said of all of us. From our own interpretation of the truth most of us will vote in favour of the motion. I have endeavoured to acquaint myself with the circumstances connected with this matter, but it is not worth while to state them now because a new situation has developed. We have only to do with recent facts, and it is of no consequence, as far as this question is concerned, what took place in the United States 100 years ago. The hon. gentleman may be quite right in what he said, but the question is now with regard to this particular motion. The present trouble in South Africa no doubt arose from a mistake having been made by the British Government in 1881. Their action at that time would naturally lead the Boers to believe that if the British nation was not a nation, of course they were represented by men whose action justified them in that opinion. I do not believe the soldiers of the British nation have ever done a thing which justified the conclusion of the Boers so much as the treaty or convention concluded with the Boers in 1881. That was not the way to conclude a peace. It was almost certain to bring about the unfortunate circumstances which have since arisen, and which have led to the action of the British Government at the present time. The hon. gentleman says it has not been absolutely proved that people of the British race in the Transvaal have been oppressed. It is very hard to prove everything to the satisfaction of everybody. We must use our own private judgment from what we hear and read. And there is not much difficulty in seeing that a very great majority of the people of this colony, and of all the Australian colonies, and of British colonies generally, are of the opinion that the Uitlanders in the Transvaal, and particularly those of the British race, have been oppressed by the Boers. Of course the hon. gentleman may be right all the time. It does not matter whether he stands alone or with a body of people of the same opinion as himself. That would not prove its correctness or justness. The whole thing may be unjust. I do not think it is, and I am not only going to vote for the

motion, but I shall vote for it with the greatest possible heartiness. I believe in the truth of the statement made in the motion. I do not look upon it as a mere matter of sending 250 men to help the British nation. I do not suppose anyone will argue that they will afford much help to the British nation, or that the British nation is in such a condition as to need their help. These men have not been inveigled into going; they are going willingly and of their own accord; and the fact that they are going not only from Queensland, but from all the other Australian colonies, and from the British colonies generally, shows, not that the Imperial Government needs help, but that the heart of the British nation beats as truly in all the colonies as it beats in Britain itself. The hon. gentleman smiles. He may think it mere sentiment, but sentiment is the life of the individual and of the nation. I say without hesitation that the action taken by the Queensland Government—and I give the Premier credit for the best possible motives—followed as it has been by all the colonies of Australia, and generally throughout the British colonies, has shown the British people that we are heart and soul with them, and are ready with our sympathy and help whenever the occasion arises. It has also shown to all the nations of the world that the British heart beats the same all over. That is what we want to show. We want to show that there is a patriotic spirit here as well as elsewhere. There have been times when some of us have been induced to say things we have regretted in connection with the actions of the Imperial Government. I have been one who has spoken very plainly when I thought their action was wrong, when, acting in connection with the local Governments, the British Government were influenced by the representatives of individuals and not by the representatives of Parliament; and I dare say I should do the same again under similar circumstances. But this is not a case of that kind. The Premier might perhaps have been a little more guarded in his words. He might have offered the troops subject to the approval of Parliament. Yet, does it not amount to the same thing whether he said that or not? He could not send them without the approval of Parliament. The representative of the Government is the representative of Parliament, and he speaks as only a person holding that position can speak, knowing that in the course of a very short time he must appear before Parliament and ask it for its approval or disapproval. Under the circumstances I not only support the action taken by the Government in this matter, but I give my very hearty approval of the motion moved by the Postmaster-General. I have only to regret that my opinion and that of my hon. friend opposite do not coincide on this occasion.

HON. F. T. BRENTNALL: There are two or three points to which reference has been made that it might be as well to put right. The Hon. Mr. Morehead has told us that those people whom our volunteers are going to fight have been forced into that part of South Africa which they now occupy by the oppression with which they were treated in the still more southern parts of South Africa which they formerly occupied. It is a well-known fact of history that the reason why the great trek of the Boers took place from Cape Colony was the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire. There were nearly 40,000 slaves in Cape Colony at the time the Act of Emancipation passed the British Parliament, and the owners of most of those slaves were the Dutch. Not all, by any means, because when slavery was allowed under the law the British perhaps held as many in proportion as the Dutch. But because the Dutch were deprived of their slaves by an

Act of the British Parliament they became discontented. It is true they had some grievance on this score, that although the British Parliament promised certain compensation for the loss of the slaves, that compensation was very slow in coming, and did not ultimately come to the full amount expected. That is about the sum and substance of the grievances of the Boers. However, they got so restless and discontented under British rule at that time that they resolved to trek, and they trekked. They were not driven out; they left of their own accord. It was a voluntary exodus from the cruel oppression of the Egyptians, otherwise the British. They went out, and they fought the Zulus, overcame them, and took possession of their country. Instead of themselves being dispossessed, they actually occupied country of which they dispossessed the aboriginal proprietors. And after they had settled in Natal, they quarrelled so frequently with the natives on the west, north, and south of them that at last it became intolerable, and the British Government had to interfere, and the British Government took possession of Natal. Hence it is a British colony. They then went further west and settled down in the country now known as the Transvaal—that is, the territory between the Vaal and the Limpopo Rivers. One part of them settled to the south of the Vaal, between the Orange River and the Vaal, and they constitute at present the Orange Free State. None of these people were driven out of the British territory. They were not forced to make that Great Trek, as it is called. They made it purely of their own accord, and they took possession of country to which they had no more right than we here have. And they went on oppressing the natives, holding them in a kind of servitude, which was nothing less than slavery, until at last Great Britain had to take possession even of the Transvaal. There is no need to follow up the events which occurred up to the period referred to by the Hon. Mr. Norton, 1881. But the settlements of 1881 and 1884, whilst giving them practical independence, provided that people of British race should have, in the Transvaal, equal civil rights with the Dutch. The hon. gentleman said the Boers were driven from their country. I think I have shown that they were not. He also said we have no right to object to their governing their own country on their own principles. I say the British subjects went there on a treaty which conceded to them equal rights with the Dutch people, and that those rights have been withheld from them. They were to have the same political privileges and the same civil rights all round. But very few years passed away after 1884 before the Volksraad passed a resolution depriving them of the franchise on a two years' system originally intended and arranged for, and compelling them to reside for five years before they could get the franchise. Then, four or five years ago—and that, I think, has caused the present troubles—the Volksraad passed another law making residence compulsory for fourteen years before any other subjects than Dutchmen, and not all of them, could obtain the franchise; and in addition to that they must have all kinds of testimonials as to character, and so on, before they were allowed the honour of having a vote. Imagine such a thing being proposed here as that in order to get a man's name on the roll he must go round and get a memorial signed by a number of his neighbours testifying to his character and conduct and standing! I maintain that the British people in the Transvaal have a right to be there, and have a right to complain that the privileges which were granted to them in the terms of the convention have been withheld from them. That is one aspect of the trouble.

But has it not been publicly stated, on more than one occasion lately, by eminent men in both the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, that the object of the formation of the Afrikander Bond, and of the present resistance to the claims for civil rights of other white people than the Boers, had one ultimate object? They were going to throw off the suzerainty of Great Britain, and have a general federated South African Dutch republic; and they were going to place all other people than their own under serious disabilities. There is no denying that; it is known to everybody who reads current history. Then the hon. gentleman says it has not been absolutely proved that the Uitlanders have any grievances. What I am stating now anybody can read for himself if he will refer to the library. There is at this time not actually in the library, because I have it myself, a blue-book of the British Parliament relating such a series of acts of injustice and oppression and cruelty and murder committed in the Transvaal upon British subjects, as amply prove that there has been a quite sufficient cause for the agitation that has taken place against the Transvaal Government. Is it no grievance that the police will enter during the night into the house of a British subject, and forcibly take out, without any evidence of guilt, some person against whom they have a grudge? Is it nothing that the police should, without any warrant or apparently sufficient cause, go to a man's house and threaten to knock in his door, and when he goes to see what is the matter he is deliberately shot down by a policeman while standing in his own doorway?

[4'30 p.m.] Is it no grievance that the wife of a missionary was killed simply because her husband protested against the lax administration of the liquor laws in Johannesburg, and the giving of strong drink to the natives? Many of the hotels being in the hands of a powerful syndicate, whose employees are continental Jews of a low class, the law is ignored, and scores of those natives, when they get their pay for working in the mines, are to be seen drunk in the streets and making disturbances, and because two missionaries protested against that, one of them, and the wife of the other were beaten down in the street one evening on their way to church, and a few days afterwards the lady died. Is that no grievance? These are facts and these are some of the facts which have induced the British Government to assist, with a determination they have not shown before since the convention of 1884 was entered into, that justice should be done to British subjects in that country. And if Great Britain is incapable of or indisposed to insist in any part of the world that common justice should be done to her subjects, it is time we ceased to send any soldiers to help her to fight her battles and get through her quarrels. Her duty is to maintain the rights of her people anywhere and everywhere, and to say that there is no better motive in the present military movement than the mere lust of pelf and gold is to put the motive of the present movement on a very low scale indeed. I am sure the principle of honour, the sense of justice, the determination to maintain the rights of British subjects in every country is at the bottom of the action of the British Government.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. F. T. BRETNALL: And it is a libel—I use the word advisedly, as the Hon. Mr. Morehead has used certain words advisedly—it is a libel on the British Government to say that they are sending 60,000 troops there simply to help a lot of adventurers to gratify their lust of pelf and gold. There is a higher motive and a higher object than that, and we should be prepared to give them credit for the higher motive. The hon. gentleman said that nothing had been

absolutely proved. I have endeavoured to prove something; he did not prove anything. His statements were simply his own personal statements—he denied that there was injustice; he denied that there was any cause for this war; but he did not prove that there had been no injustice. He cannot prove it. I maintain that it is impossible for any man to prove that there has not been injustice practised upon British subjects in the Transvaal within the last three or four years. One thing more the Hon. Mr. Morehead referred to, and I am sorry that he did refer to it, because it is not quite the right thing to say that serious business of this kind is nothing but fireworks. It is serious business, and if these fellow-colonists of ours, whose courage and loyalty we all admire, find themselves in the Transvaal before this fighting is over, it will be something more serious than fireworks for them. It will be fireworks, but it will not be the kind to which the hon. gentleman facetiously referred. It is not necessary to say anything further in proof of the statements in this resolution that Her Majesty's subjects in the South African Republic have for a long period suffered burdensome disabilities and grievous injustice. I have not a shadow of doubt they have. I have studied the subject a great deal for the last three months, and I have no doubt that any hon. gentleman who likes to read the books available on the subject will come to the same conclusion. I am glad the motion has been brought before the Council; I am very sorry on the other hand that it should not be unanimously supported.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. WEBBER: I am in full sympathy with sending a contingent to the Transvaal, and I think it is the right thing to do. We are part and parcel of the British Empire, and every effort should be made to render the Empire every assistance. I suppose the assistance won't amount to much, but the fact of the different colonies sending contingents will show the nations of the world that the British Empire is one, and that they are ready to assist the dear old motherland; and if we get involved in the future we can claim the assistance of England seeing that we had given her all the assistance we could. It may be said that it is useless to send this contingent because it is so small, but I say that we must look at the moral effect and not merely the effect it will produce in actual fighting, though that may be something considerable. I think the Premier is to be complimented for taking the initiative in this matter, and I am glad that the movement has been entered into spontaneously by the other colonies, because it shows that people of the Anglo-Saxon race in various parts of the British Empire are ready to help the old country if necessity arises. With regard to the justice of the war, that is a matter which the ablest intellects that govern our great and glorious Empire have fully considered, and I take it that opinions expressed in this little part of the Empire amount to nothing. Those men know all the circumstances, and they must certainly know what is best. They have shown very great forbearance in this matter; they have exhausted all the arts of diplomacy; they have made every effort to maintain peace; and at last they have been actually forced into the war by the Boers themselves. I do not think it is for us to question the wisdom of the war; it is for us to render the old country every assistance we can in the way we are now doing, and I think the Premier deserves the thanks of every patriotic Queenslander, in fact, every patriotic Australian, who is proud of belonging to the grand old Anglo-Saxon race from which we are sprung. There is not much more that I can say. I will

only say, in conclusion, that all honour is due to the brave fellows who are going to fight alongside their fellow-soldiers from the dear old motherland in defence of the Empire—all honour is due to the brave fellows who are going to fight under the grand old flag, that has for a thousand years braved the battle and the breeze, for the supremacy of England in South Africa, and I believe they will be prepared to do so in any other part of the world whenever the British Empire is in danger.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. ALLAN: I trusted that this motion would be passed unanimously, and I regret that any member of this Council or any member of the community should be arrayed on the side of the enemies of that great country which has given us our land and has given us our Constitution. Is it well, I ask, that in a time like this, when our boys are arming themselves and going to the seat of war to risk their lives, that any deprecatory words should be uttered to discourage or dispirit them? I think it is not. I think it is very unnatural; indeed, I might almost say criminal and disloyal and very un-called for. It is a small matter how many men we send, but the effect of sending these few men together with those from Canada and the other colonies will be a great object lesson to other parts of the world, and that means a greater insurance of ourselves than anything else we could possibly do. It shows that if any part of the British Empire is attacked every British subject in every other part of the world has to be accounted for.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. ALLAN: We have not many friends in the world except our American cousins, and it is as well to let the Continental nations know that the British nation is closely in touch with her colonies in every part of the world. I think it is now clearly recognised that no part of the British Empire can stand isolated when any other part is being attacked, and that Britons must stand or fall together the whole world over. I hold this to be a thoroughly righteous war. The British Government have been very patient and long-suffering; they have exhausted every argument to avoid bloodshed in obtaining justice for our fellow-subjects in South Africa; but our diplomatists have been flouted, our fellow-subjects have been insulted, and women have been spat upon. This may be a highly chivalrous nation, as we have been told, but they have indulged in a great deal of boasting and brutality. They have already had reason to regret some of that boasting and brutality, but when the war is over I have no doubt that they will be treated far better than our fellow-subjects were treated by them before the war commenced. I will not take up any more time, but I trust that this morbid sympathy shown for the Boers—who, I admit, are a brave people, but who are an ignorant, brutal, slave-driving people—I hope that morbid sympathy which is being shown for them in some parts will be dropped. I regret that this resolution is not going to be carried unanimously. However, it has my warmest sympathy, and I hope that even those who may be opposed to it will not vote against it, at all events.

Question put and passed. (Applause.)

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: As we have just passed the resolution unanimously—

Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: Not unanimously.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Very nearly. It has been passed almost unanimously, and I ask hon. gentlemen to stand and sing one verse of "God Save the Queen."

Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: I will sing "God Save the Queen" with anyone.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS then rose in their places and sang one verse of "God Save the Queen," after which they gave three cheers for Her Majesty.

The Council adjourned at twelve minutes to 5 o'clock.